

Please amend the application as follows:

In the Specification

*Please replace the paragraphs at page 1, lines 5 through 16 with the following paragraphs:*

Serial No. 09/321,090, filed May 28, 1999, entitled A QUORUMLESS CLUSTER USING DISK-BASED MESSAGING, by Richard Frank, Michael Cusson, Joydip Kundu, and Daniel E. O'Shaughnessy, inventors;

Serial No. 09/321,998, filed May 28, 1999, entitled AVOIDING N-SQUARED HEARTBEAT MESSAGING PROBLEM IN AN OPERATING CLUSTER VIA CLOSED LOOP MESSAGING THEME, by Richard Frank, Michael Cusson, Joydip Kundu, and Daniel E. O'Shaughnessy, inventors;

Serial No. 09/322,472, filed May 28, 1999, entitled USING A CLUSTER-WIDE SHARED REPOSITORY TO PROVIDE THE LATEST CONSISTENT DEFINITION OF THE CLUSTER (AVOIDING THE PARTITION-IN-TIME PROBLEM), by Joydip Kundu, Richard Frank, Michael Cusson and Daniel E. O'Shaughnessy, inventors.

*Please replace the paragraph at page 10, lines 4 through 9 with the following paragraph:*

As described above in conjunction with FIG. 2, the cluster manager 32, in concert with the cluster managers residing on node\_2 - node\_4 14, 16, 18, manages cluster connectivity within the quorumless cluster 10. For the cluster managers to effectively cooperate in the connectivity management endeavor, a facility for sharing data is provided. The shareable storage device 22 of FIG. 1 houses a repository for this data sharing facility.

*Please replace the paragraphs in the Abstract, at page 21, lines 3 through 22 with the following paragraphs:*

A quorumless network cluster provides a highly available system by addressing the partition-in-space and partition-in-time problems in network clusters.

In a particular solution, a cluster manager (CM) can use disk based messaging to manage the operation of the cluster. Each node within the cluster must have access to a shared disk to operate within the cluster.

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A particular methodology can operate the cluster in a closed loop between nodes 1 to N. If a node fails to receive a heartbeat message from its predecessor in the loop, it initiates a cluster reconfiguration by sending a reconfiguration message to each other node in the cluster.

The quorumless cluster can also include a common storage for a cluster definition. Each node may provide a proposed change to the cluster definition, however only a single coordinator node may update the cluster definition and apply the suggested changes.

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*Amendments to the specification are indicated in the attached "Marked Up Version of Amendments" (pages i - ii ).*

In the Claims

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*Please amend Claim(s) 6 and 9.*

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6. (Amended) The method of Claim 5 wherein determining the figure of merit includes:  
determining an alternate figure of merit derived by assessing merit criteria for the member node; and  
selecting between the proposed figure of merit and the alternate figure of merit.

- sub 1  
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9. (Amended) The method of Claim 8 wherein providing the requested node figure of merit includes:  
determining an alternate node figure of merit derived by assessing merit criteria for the member node; and  
selecting between the proposed node figure of merit and the alternate node figure of merit.

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*Amendments to the claims are indicated in the attached "Marked Up Version of Amendments" (page iii).*